

# The East York Garden

Newsletter of the East York Garden Club

November & December, 2006

The East York Garden Club is a member of the Ontario Horticultural Association, District 5.

Meetings are held on the third Thursday of each month (except August and December) in the Stan Wadlow Clubhouse, 373 Cedarvale Avenue at 7:30 p.m. Refreshments are available at 7:00 p.m. The Clubhouse is wheelchair-accessible. Visitors are always welcome.

Yearly membership fees are \$20 for a single, and \$30 for a family. To inquire about membership, contact Denise Alexander at 416-759-5736.

Visit us on the web at [www.eygc.ca](http://www.eygc.ca)

President:  
Malcolm Geast

Vice-President:  
Dawn McEachern

Newsletter Editor:  
Malcolm Geast

## Annual General Meeting and Potluck Supper Thursday, November 16, 2006

Doors open at 6:30, Dinner begins at 7:00

This is our final meeting of the year. The evening will begin with a potluck supper, followed by the awards for the August flower show and the photography contest. This year we'll be presenting the newly restored *George Henry Trophy* (for highest points in the year's flower shows) and a trophy to the overall winner of the photography contest. We'll finish off with the election of the 2007 Executive. There will also be many impressive and exciting door prizes. All of the entries in the photography contest will be on display throughout the evening.

All those attending are asked to bring a dish of food (at least six servings). It would be appreciated if items such as lasagna or desserts could be pre-cut. If possible, an appropriate serving utensil would also be welcome. Don't be afraid to bring "too much" – extra food will be donated to Touchstone. And it's always helpful in the clean-up afterwards if you can put your name on the bowl or plate. The Club will be supplying dishes and cutlery, so you won't need to bring your own. Punch, tea and coffee will also be provided.

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## New Members

Please extend a warm welcome to the following new members who have joined the Club in the past few months. Please welcome them and take the time to answer any questions that they may have about our Club.

Brian Green     Jane Hawkins  
Ruth Taylor     Ina Taylor  
Wendy Aviet Scandrett



## From the President's Desk

Our second 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary is nearly over. You may recall that at the end of 2004 we were looking forward to celebrating our 80<sup>th</sup> in 2005. However, early in the new year, we put the celebration on hiatus for a year, when a check of newly-discovered old yearbooks showed that our first year was 1926, not 1925. Upon further investigation, we discovered that the error had gone undetected since 1950!

This 80<sup>th</sup> (the real one) has been quite an eventful year. In June we held a garden tour, our first in three years. The Alluring Gardens of East York attracted two hundred visitors on a weekend in late June. Thanks to those who made their gardens available, to those who planned the day, and to the many volunteers who helped out at the gardens.

The following weekend, as one group of members manned our Canada Day booth in Stan Wadlow Park, another group marched along the streets of East York, as we made our first showing in the Canada Day Parade in many years. New EYGC shirts, with a new logo were sported by the parade participants, and many of the volunteers at the Park.

2006 also saw the return of the East York Blooming Contest. In conjunction with Councillor Janet Davis, and the City of Toronto Parks Department the contest was revived after an absence of several years. A dozen of our members judged over 80 front gardens in late July and early August. Winning gardeners received their awards in front of a packed crowd at the East York Civic Centre on September 12, and the two top gardens will be entered in next year's city-wide contest. And of course, the Blooming Contest will be back again in 2007.

Our Annual Show in August was a resounding success, with the highest participation rate in the past four years, and two excellent, well-attended talks from Christine Moore and Anna Leggatt. And just two weeks later, we had our fall bus tour, with 50 of us enjoying a day out at in the Milton-Guelph area.

Booths at the East York Multicultural Day and the Environment Day at Stan Wadlow were another way in which the Club continued to have a noticeable and well-received presence in the community.

But of course, our most conspicuous project is on the east side of Stan Wadlow Park, at The Rockery. The bulb-planting efforts in the fall of 2005 paid off with a vibrant display of colour this spring. The dedication shown by Club members at the spring cleanup, the early summer planting of perennials and annuals, and the ongoing weeding ensured that the flowerbeds would look better than ever this year. The continuing progress on The Rockery is due to more than 30 volunteers, including the committee leaders Diane Ronan, Glen Hutzul, Roz Regnier, and Maxine Cashore.

On a personal level, I have continued to make East York's presence felt outside of our area, as I serve my second year as an Assistant District Director for District 5 of the Ontario Horticultural Association, and as a member of the Association's Long-Range Planning Committee.

Our Club would not be as successful and thriving as it is without the wonderful support and dedication of many volunteers.

*Malcolm Geast*



## Bulb Planting at The Rockery

by Diane Ronan

There was a wicked wind from the west, and it felt like we were going to end up in The Land of Oz, but 19 members of the EYGC (including myself) braved the elements and planted almost 2000 bulbs at The Rockery on Sunday, October 29th.

What a show we can share with the community come next spring!

Special thanks to the following volunteers: Anna Leggatt, Irene Derzay, Violet Jew, Carol Bouley, Elizabeth Adam, Roz Regnier, Darina Quinn, Glen Hutzul, Ruby Brett, Wini Stoddart, Sonia van Heerden, Maxine Cashore, Gail Gregory, Veronica Callinan, Janet Carrington, Mary Culver, Dawn McEachern and Malcolm Geast.



## 2006 & 2007 Photography Contest

by Malcolm Geast

At November's meeting, we'll be presenting the prizes for the 2006 Photography Contest. Originally started as a millennium project in 2000, the competition has now become an ongoing annual tradition. This year there will be an additional prize. Having been associated with the competition since its beginning, earlier this year I proposed to donate a trophy, and after some deliberation about the name, have decided to call it the *Malcolm Geast Photography Award*. The overall winner of this year's contest will be the first recipient of the new trophy.

Next year we'll be making another change. In addition to the contest that we hold every fall, there will be two monthly shows in the spring. But the format for these will be somewhat different, and designed for fun and for the involvement of all members, including the non-photographers. Entrants will bring in one picture, mounted on a white background. All of the entries will be laid out on a table, members will be asked to vote for the best photo, and the decision will be announced at the end of the meeting. Winners will receive a ribbon, and the results and will be included in the tallying

for the trophy at the end of the year. In 2007, the two competitions will take place at the February and April meetings. And one more thing – the categories will be interpretive, and designed to stimulate your imagination and creativity.

Here are the categories for 2007:

Monthly Shows:

February: Evergreen

April: Egg (We told you that they'll be interpretive!)

Fall Competition:

1 - Captured Beauty (*flower close-ups*)

2 - Monochrome (*any horticultural subject, in black and white*)

3 - Three (*things in threes*)

4 - Eccentric Gardens

5 - Garden Tools

Full details and rules will be included in the 2007 yearbook.

## A Tipsy Tip

Have you ever planted a paperwhite narcissus, only to find that its growth becomes a little too enthusiastic, resulting in it tipping over as it becomes too top-heavy? It's enough to drive you to drink. But before you grab hold of that bottle of gin, perhaps you should consider giving some of it to the paperwhite. Earlier this year, researchers at Cornell University's Department of Horticulture found that a dilute solution of alcohol could reduce the height of paperwhite narcissus by as much as 50%, without affecting the size or fragrance of the flowers.

For the best results, they suggest "planting your paperwhite bulbs in stones, gravel, marbles, glass beads, etc. as usual. Add water as you normally would, then wait about 1 week until roots are growing, and the shoot is green and growing about 1-2" above the top of the bulb. At this point, pour off the water and replace it with a solution of 4 to 6% alcohol, made from just about any "hard" liquor. You can do the calculations to figure the dilution, but, as an example, to get a 5% solution from a 40% distilled spirit (e.g., gin, vodka, whiskey, rum, tequila), you add 1 part of the booze to 7 parts of water. This is an 8-fold dilution yielding 5% alcohol. Then, simply use this solution, instead of water, for further watering of your bulbs."

It appears that the alcohol reduces the ability of the plant to absorb water, causing it to reduce leaf and stem growth, without also diminishing the size or longevity of the flower.

There's no word yet on how this may affect other plants or vegetables, but they do suggest that you shouldn't use beer or wine – like us, your plant's health may be affected by the extra sugar.

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## Emailed Newsletters

If you'd like to have the newsletter emailed to you (instead of, or in addition to the mailed copy), drop us a line at [newsletter@eygc.ca](mailto:newsletter@eygc.ca). If you're looking for back issues, they're available on the Club's website ([www.eygc.ca](http://www.eygc.ca)).



*Past-Presidents Barb Foster and Lucie Simons cut the 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary cake at the October meeting. Allan Foster, our previously-scheduled speaker, was unable to attend the meeting. However, there was no disappointment, as Anna Leggatt filled in with an interesting discussion of **Autumn in the Garden**. Allan Foster will now be one of our speakers in the first half of 2007.*

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## September Show Results

Congratulations go to Vera Stoyanoff for the Best Cut Specimen in the September Flower Show, and to Anna Leggatt for the Best Design.

There were 116 entries, from eight entrants, down somewhat from the past two years.

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## An Orphaned Plant...

Does this plant look familiar? It was left behind after September's meeting. Our guess is that it was an entry in the flower show, and that the owner forgot about it. If it's yours, let us know, and we'll make sure it finds its way back home.



## And the Survey Says....

There were 21 responses to this year's questionnaire. Here are some of the results:

The first three questions asked about topics and activities in 2007. Meeting with the most support were Renovating a Mature Garden, Nature Photography Around the World, and Organic Pesticides. There was a multitude of ideas for new topics and activities. Interest in local activities was shown with suggestions for discussions of Trees of Toronto & East York, the Gardens of Todmorden Mills, Allan Gardens, the Brick Works, and the new TBG gardens. There were several requests for specific plant and flower topics, garden-related concerns (shade gardening, small gardens, naturalized gardens, etc.), and gardening techniques (growing from seeds, propagation & grafting, lawn care, etc.). You also told us that you like hearing about gardening tips, you find demonstrations to be useful, and you enjoy opportunities to share information and skills with other members.

Only a few speakers were recommended. One in particular, "The Rose Man", is, sad to say, not as easy to enter in our line up as he used to be. The Rose Man is Joel Schraven, from Pickering Nurseries. Unfortunately (for us), Pickering Nurseries moved to Port Hope a couple of years ago, putting Joel out of range for us.

We were gratified to see the enthusiastic response to our speakers' schedule. Almost half of the surveys noted that Hazel & Joe Cook (*Delphiniums to Die For*) were their favourite speakers in 2006. And, coming on the heels of a very enjoyable bus trip in September, there were numerous ideas for next year's trip.

There was a continued preference for a pot-luck supper in July. Partly for a change, and partly due to a few uncertainties related to the skateboard park, we won't be holding it at The Rockery in 2007. Instead we'll be holding it in a member's garden. In the next few weeks, we'll be contacting those of you who have volunteered your garden.

There was also a suggestion that we replace the draw table with a 50/50 draw, something that we'll definitely be considering.

There were enough ideas expressed to fill up a two-meeting-a-month calendar, and all of them will be taken into account when we're planning our program and activities for next year. And some of those that don't result in meeting topics will be used for newsletter articles.

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## Membership Renewal

It's time once again to renew your EYGC membership, one of the best bargains around. Included with your membership you get:

- 10 monthly meetings
- three monthly flower shows
- an Annual Show & Competition
- six newsletters
- a yearbook
- an autumn seed exchange
- a spring plant sale
- discounts and special promotions at selected nurseries (for example, 10% at Bill's, Sheridan, Plant World, Fiesta Nursery)

Where else can you get all that for just \$20? There's a renewal form on the back page. You can renew by mail, or at the November or January meetings.

## Upcoming Events

As we head towards Christmas and the colder winter weather, the number of horticulturally related events becomes fewer and fewer. As a result, there aren't a lot of upcoming events that we can tell you about. However, it won't be long until we can start looking forward to the spring garden shows. Here's a preview:

**Getting the Jump on Spring** – Saturday, February 17 – The snow may still be on the ground, but the Toronto Botanical Garden will be getting you in the gardening frame of mind as it brings together garden experts and vendors under one roof. Spend the day there and soak in all of the information you'll need to prepare for the coming spring. Runs from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Admission and parking are free. The TBG is located on the southwest corner of Lawrence & Leslie.

**Canada Blooms** – March 7 to 11 – Billed as Canada's "largest horticultural exhibition" (and unfortunately, also its most crowded), Canada Blooms marks the start of spring for many gardeners. Taking place at the Metro Convention Centre (right beside the CN Tower), admission is \$18 (\$16 for seniors & children).

**Successful Gardening** – March 15 to 18 – Running in conjunction with the International Home & Garden Show, this show returns for its 15th year. It takes place at the International Centre (Derry Road & Airport Road). Admission is \$12, and parking is free.

**OHA District 5 Annual General Meeting** – Saturday, April 21 – Yes, this is the same event that we co-hosted in 2005. Next year it will take place at the Georgina Ice Palace in Keswick. With a theme of "Rejuvenate and Grow!" dynamic speakers, a gorgeous flower show and exciting raffle & door prizes are promised. We'll have a lot more information for you in January.

And one more thing....It is a distance away, but it's most likely the final garden show/sale of the year: On Saturday, November 25, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., at the Heirloom Seed Sanctuary of the Sisters of Providence Motherhouse in Kingston (1200 Princess St.), there will be a sale of Heirloom Vegetables, Flowers, and Herb Seeds.

*You'll find a complete list of events on our website ([www.eygc.ca](http://www.eygc.ca)). The list is updated at least once a week.*

### East York Garden Club Membership Renewal Form

Name .....

Address .....

Postal Code..... Phone # .....

email .....

(Note that we will only use your email address to send you EYGC information. **We do not distribute it to anyone else.**)

Membership fees are due by January of each year. Fees for 2007 are \$20 for a single, and \$30 for a family membership. Fees can be paid in person at a regular meeting of the Club or by mailing this form and a cheque (payable to "East York Garden Club") to:

East York Garden Club  
18 Warvet Crescent  
East York, Ontario  
M4B 1P3